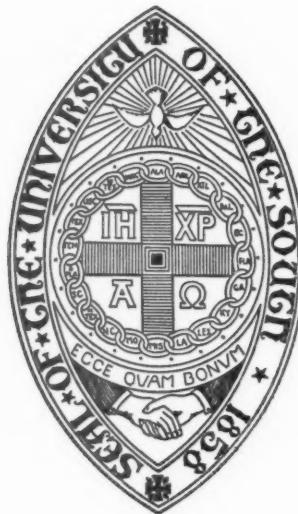


# The Saint Luke's Journal



VOLUME III

NUMBER 1

ST. LUKE'S DAY, 1959

School of Theology  
The University of the South  
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# The Saint Luke's Journal of Theology

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## AN ANGLICAN PLACE FOR ST. PETER

By CHARLES E. RICE

Whenever the Church restates her apostolic authority, she must also define the prominence of St. Peter. This definition must be done, in part, as a defense against the error of "papalism." It must be done, further, to correct the Protestant neglect of this leader of the Apostles. Primarily, however, St. Peter's role must be understood because it is essential to the very nature of apostolic authority.

Excavation under St. Peter's in Rome began in 1938. Twelve years later the Pope in his Christmas message announced the recovery of the tomb of the Apostle Peter. This research bore the marks of bona fide archaeology and non-Roman scholars have not ignored the findings. Yet, more important than whether this is the grave of St. Peter are the doctrinal claims implicit in this digging.

In popular Protestant thought it couldn't matter less if Nero had thrown the martyr's corpse in the Tiber. This is not merely Protestant disdain of relics. It is a way of saying that Protestantism has delivered St. Peter to Roman patronage. The traditions of the Reformation usually cast their lot with St. Paul. More specifically, it is the *doctrines* of St. Paul which become the focus of apostolic authority for Protestants. Efforts to minimize St. Peter's role in the early Church are good Protestant homiletics. As its worst this maneuver smacks of "sour-grapes". Anglican thought and life cannot afford such abandon.

Whatever be the facts about his tomb, these are times when catholic Christians can recover the stature of the Apostle Peter. Furthermore, there are hopeful signs that this recovery can be made without beginning on Roman grounds. We can rediscover the decisive place of St. Peter in apostolic history without agreeing with Karl Adam that "Peter lives on in the Bishops of Rome" (Karl Adam, *The Spirit of Catholicism*, Doubleday Image series).

Contemporary Biblical study offers concrete help in this task. For example, that notorious text of St. Matthew 16:17 ff. has been resifted, weighed, and felt with new force. It can be no longer assumed that Jesus had no churchly designs, and this fact alone reopens the

possibility that this text is genuine. Even opponents of its genuineness, such as Bultmann, now admit that it was not contrived by Roman churchmen but that it had Palestinian origin. Some now see it as one of the gems of oral tradition to which the author of Matthew had sole access. The authenticity of the passage is no longer precluded.

If Matthew 16:17-18 is taken seriously, then the vocation of Simon Peter is due re-examination. In what unique way is his person to be linked with the "rock" upon which the Church is to be built? Chrysostom interpreted that not Peter but his confession was the rock. Calvin passed along the same reading. Augustine and Luther taught that Christ was the "rock" meant in the text. Post-Reformation controversy tended to solidify exegesis into two camps. Rome held out that Peter was the "rock"; Protestants refused to see it this way. Neither camp was really debating exegetically and both saw the Papacy as the issue at stake.

Only recently has Biblical scholarship penetrated this stalemate. Rome is no longer adamant on the subject; for to her, in any case, papal authority does not hinge on Biblical interpretation. Anglican and other non-Roman writers are no longer ill at ease in allowing the "rock" to be Peter himself. John Lowe, in his most worth-while monograph on St. Peter, illustrates the possibilities of the new mood. He concludes: "The statement, 'Thou art Peter (Kepha) and upon this rock (kephā) I will build my church,' must certainly be taken to refer to Peter personally" (p. 55, John Lowe, *Saint Peter*, Oxford University Press, 1956).

Oscar Cullmann carefully demonstrates the case for St. Peter and suggests that we shall feel the force of the identity by thinking of Simon's name as "Simon Rock" (p. 20, Oscar Cullmann, *Peter: Disciple, Apostle, Martyr*, Westminster, 1950). Rudolf Bultmann maintains that the early Church (to whom he attributes the text) identifies Peter as the "rock" (p. 45, *Theology of the New Testament, Vol. I*, Charles Scribners Sons, 1954).

V

## II

The significance for Anglicans of the authority of St. Peter cannot depend solely on this Matthean text. In the synoptic picture, as well as in the Acts of the Apostles, there is a persistent first place given to Simon Bar-Jona. He figures prominently in enough incidents so that character sketches of him have been given with confidence by later interpreters

and artists. He has virtually been typed psychologically with the outlines of ruggedness, enthusiasm, and bold temper. Some have conjectured that these natural ingredients of leadership thrust him for a time in the role of Pentecostal leadership. This latter school of thought just as easily displaces St. Peter with St. Paul!

If Peter's role was just an accident of temperament, then he still has no constitutional part in the founding of the Church. The uniqueness of his apostolic function must be pressed beyond this. Indeed, the very nature of apostolic authority demands more than psychological fitness for the task. This is the undoing of those arguments which disqualify Peter as the "rock" because of his threefold denial. The real question is whether Jesus elected, appointed, or ordained Simon Peter to a peculiar authority.

The descent of the Holy Spirit empowers the Church to be the Church. Yet, this Pentecostal beginning has an earthly as well as a divine link with the Incarnate Life. The origin and life of the Church has two foci: the earthly ministry of Jesus and the perpetual sustenance of the Holy Spirit. Simon is the historical "rock" which is addressed by both divine vectors. The Church must always be addressed from both directions. If the Church neglects the historical identity of this "Rock" the result is Gnosticism. If the Church neglects the required endorsement of the "Rock" by the Holy Spirit then the result is idolatry. The former is the peril of Protestantism; the latter is the disposition of Rome.

The vocation of St. Peter and of the Church itself can be discerned in the New Testament only if the New Testament is read as a document of divine particulars. If the New Covenant is no more than new generalities about God, then it is scandalous to attribute to Christ a concrete entree of God's salvation. But the New Testament does stake out specific disclosures of God's work. It does claim a peculiar and unique ministry for definite human and elemental vessels. In this light, it can be seen how Jesus would assign to Peter a sacramental role in the birth of the Church.

The metaphor "rock" points to just such a primacy for this Apostle. It is a metaphor even if it does become a personal name for Simon. The fact that it is used of Christ himself (Romans 9:33) does not invalidate its significance for Peter's vocation. When Isaiah (of the Exile) wanted to recall the Old Israel to her divine rootage *in history* he said, "look to the rock from which you were hewn . . ." (Isa. 51:1).

God lays historical "stones" for his redemptive path, so why can He not designate one Simon as elementary in the New Israel?

### III

When the Vatican speaks of "plenitudo potestatis," it refers to the monopoly of authority which resides, as it were, in St. Peter and subsequently in the Papal Chair. We must disallow such a monopoly of power, yet without disowning the primacy of St. Peter in the economy of apostolic authority. If we can do this, then the controversy over whether the Pope succeeds St. Peter has been disarmed.

St. Peter was authorized not that he might dispense that authority at will and hence authorize a personal successor, but precisely in virtue of his commission to be a foundation. It was the Church which Christ intended to build and not merely a foundation. Chronologically, we may say that it is Christ's design to authorize Peter, then the Twelve, then the Church. Theologically, Peter's authority depends upon the authority of and for the Church itself, without which an infinite succession of foundations would be superfluous. The Church itself is primary to all authority which is commissioned for the Church's sake. Jesus authorized a foundation only because in the fullness of the Spirit He would authorize the edifying of the Church.

Thus understood, St. Peter's place becomes a clue to the meaning of all apostolic authority. The apostolic character of the Church is derived from the *co-incidence* of the Holy Spirit with the "Jesus-tutored" apostles. The New Testament does not depict the descent of the Holy Spirit as arbitrary and individualistic. Thus it is that an apostolic inquiry into the validity of the Church at Antioch, for example, is warranted. The descent of the Spirit is always allowed apostolic verification in the New Testament community. Even the Apostles themselves must have an historical referent in their midst. St. Peter is that one. It is his place to propose the election which fills the niche Judas left (Acts 1:22). Apostolicity does not come from Peter (witness St. Paul) but it must always demonstrate St. Peter as a reference (*e.g.* Galatians 1:18).

### IV

St. Peter was clearly a decisive rallying point for the creation of the Christian Church. Whatever more must be claimed, he was a central figure in the first stage of Christendom's rise. Can he now be

dropped away like the spent compartment of a missile? Was his primacy one which remains only for its historical interest, or is he still the "rock"? No doctrine of the Church is complete which has not clarified this realm of questioning.

Rome is clear enough. Karl Adam speaks well for her when he writes, "There will always be a living Peter, whose faith will confirm his brethren" (p. 97, Adam, *op. cit.*). We cannot go this far and still understand Church authority episcopally. Yet, can we not believe that Simon Peter still stands as an indispensable sacramental figure in redemptive history? The Church of Christ in any and every age proceeds both from Heaven and out of that portal of human history to which Peter holds the key. Rome has no reason to insist that she alone knows the way back to this apostolic figure, but she is right to say that go back there we must.

The warning of John Lowe is apt here: "The laying of a foundation stone is a unique act, essential, unrepeatable. It has abiding consequences for the future but no one can take over Peter's function as the "rock" man . . ." (p. 62, Lowe, *op. cit.*). Because Peter is unique in his office as a foundation stone, the Church must in some way give him his place or else she cannot be the Church. Mechanical identity, either Roman or Anglican, is surely not enough. We cannot really get back to Peter without a pilgrimage through the whole breadth of apostolic faith. Still, we cannot forget that the apostles, Peter foremost, were originally persons and not doctrines. Real continuity with them and recognition of their place must find its way through the personal "stuff" of Christian history. Apostolic authority is an organic part of the Body of Christ.

## THE LITURGY AND MODERN MAN

*By JOHN C. PARKER, JR.*

"And they told what things were done in the way and how he was known of them in breaking of bread."<sup>1</sup>

Prior to World War I it was possible, and perhaps quite common, for the Christian church, in its various denominations, to consider it-

<sup>1</sup>LUKE 24:35.

self the actualization, with minor defects, of what the Christian Church should be. The schisms were a disturbing factor, but as long as each denomination could convince itself of its own absolute validity, the anomalies of schism did not weigh heavily upon the heart of the Church. In battles with seemingly disastrous new ideas of men like Darwin, the Church presented a remarkably united front. Only a very few intellectuals questioned the right of the Church to a place in society, and these radical thoughts did not at the moment disturb many people within the Church. In fact, it was possible for Protestants to assume not only that the Gospel of Christ was available to all men in the West, but, moreover, that it was available in a purified form thanks to the Reformation. Catholicism, of course, was certain that Protestants had defected from the Church; and the Roman Pontiff instituted the policy of absolute refusal to recognize Protestant and Orthodox communions, and, for good measure against the Darwinians as well as the great Protestant scholars, installed the Holy Ghost as author of Holy Scripture.

Christian denominations were narrowly nationalistic in Europe and narrowly denominational in America. Indeed, from nineteenth century literature—with striking exceptions—it seems that the impressive expansion of the Church's foreign missionary program at that time was, by most people, regarded as the responsibility of the *Christian lands* as much, or more than it was that of the Church. In many cases it happened even that semi-official "societies" were far more effective in missionary operations than were official denominational hierarchies.

It is not pertinent for this article to consider reasons and results of these attitudes, but merely to point out that prior to World War I the Church was essentially the Church of what one theologian chooses to call "The Protestant Era", with certain characteristics which distinguish it from the post-war period, which may be regarded as the beginning of our own era. In important respects, too, the Protestant Era was a time in which the opinions and assumptions which the denominations, Protestant and Catholic alike, accepted uncritically, were as remarkable as those opinions and beliefs which divided them so bitterly.

By World War I, however, at least some isolated Christians had the perception to see the new era ahead with clearer vision than even men like F. D. Maurice had managed earlier, and in England a Studdert-Kennedy could take up a pen and write:

Christ's Church must find room for all, and must treat all alike;

kings and colliers, poets and plumbers, labourers with hand and brain, all alike are God's children and workers in God's world. *We want a world in which social position is based solely upon social service . . .* some of us want it more than anything else in the world—and we do not believe we can get it while such an enormous body of men of England stand aloof from religion and the religious motive . . . God made the Church for the people, and not the people for the Church. We are willing that the Church should perish, nay we are anxious that *the Church as it is* should perish if only the people are saved. . . . We want the people to find the truth, and that is all we want.<sup>2</sup>

Studdert-Kennedy may sound quaint in our day, but in 1918 he was a revolutionary. The whole period between the wars was one of multitudinous schemes to solve or evade problems of the new era. There were movements "to return to" the New Testament, or the Primitive Church, or to St. Thomas Aquinas, or the Protestant Reformation. There were, at the same time, various "liberalisms" and "modernisms" which sought to evade the problem by not emphasizing those elements of the Gospel which secularism doubted, even when secularism doubted the existence of God.

A great deal can be made of this, as well as the pre-World War I phenomena, but the decisive element for this paper is the nature of the problem itself which Fundamentalism and Liberalism were trying to solve. If a liturgical awakening promises possibility of doing what these other schemes failed to do, it must follow that something in the liturgy and the corporate sacramental life of the Church corresponds to something in the secular world which the older movements and "neosisms"—even the ritualistic revivals—overlooked. Moreover, if the liturgy is a source or framework for new life in the Church, it is necessary to concern ourselves with the meaning of the liturgical acts and life themselves, and not merely with doctrines about the liturgy. The liturgy is regarded here as the expression in actions of the faith of the people worshiping. It often happens in practice either that the words of a rite do not adequately express the Christian faith of those assembled, or that their faith is not Christian. However, I cannot accept, for reasons which will appear presently, that it is the spirit which counts, and not the words and actions. Where there is antipathy between the words and actions, and the spirit, either the congregation needs conversion or the words and actions need to be changed.

<sup>2</sup>G. A. Studdert-Kennedy, *Best of* (New York, Harper & Brothers, 1948) pp. 14-15.

It is evident that the failure of the various doctrinal reactions to meet secularism with meaningful Gospel has been due to their failure to face and to answer the questions which modern secular man is asking. The reactionary theologies have reasserted indispensable old truths, but in terms not relevant to the new questions. It is not that the modern world has merely wandered from the teachings of Jesus or of St. Thomas or of Martin Luther. What the modern world doubts is Christianity's most fundamental assertions, not merely the theological structures erected upon those assertions. It is futile to attempt to reaffirm the doctrine of the Incarnation, for instance, to the modern secular man who doubts the reality of a personal God to become Incarnate. The problem is not merely that modern man has misread the facts; modern man doubts that there are any facts to be read. Only those Christians whose faith is strong enough to permit them to appreciate and to understand the radical religious doubt of the modern world can hope to bring the Gospel to modern man.

If "the Church is to bring completeness, the wholeness of Christ to the whole man," then modern man may rightly expect this wholeness to come as something he is personally aware of, as well as a theory he must accept or reject on faith. It is the fact of redemption which is of decisive importance now, as always, rather than interpretations of the fact.

There is a movement throughout Christendom, a movement of the Holy Spirit, in His Church, to bring this wholeness, this fullness, to the world. It is a proclamation of the Gospel in terms of fellowship. The Zoe movement in Greece, the Iona movement in Scotland, the liturgical movement in France, Parishfield in America, the Kirchentag in Germany, the Parish and People movement in England, are among its manifestations.

Ultimately, the evidence for the credibility of the Gospel in the eyes of the world will rest upon the evidence of a quality of life manifested in the Church which the world cannot find elsewhere.<sup>8</sup>

The Church has always believed, in theory if not always in practice, that the unit of operation in the Church is the parish. As a matter of fact, modern man's only contact with the Church is through the parish. He has no dealings with Lambeth Palace, the World Council of Churches, the Vatican or any of the other places where we sometimes consider the Church to be. The members of the parishes, and practi-

<sup>8</sup>E. W. Southcott, *The Parish Comes Alive* (New York, Morehouse-Gorham, 1957) p. 3.

cally they alone, are Christ's ambassadors to modern man. It is becoming increasingly evident that no kind or amount of mass communication evangelism can substitute for the personal mission of the members of the parishes. They are the front line, and they are really the only line.

The parish which becomes aware of this will know that it is not merely one fellowship among others, one institution among many in the community listed in the yellow pages, but that it is, whether it wishes or likes or deserves to be, the holy fellowship. It is called as such to represent God to man and man to God; and if the Holy Spirit cannot use the parish as a medium, there is really no reason that we know of to suppose that modern man will find this wholeness anywhere else. What objectively distinguishes the holy fellowship from other fellowships, especially to those outside, is what the holy fellowship does when it gathers as a body—its liturgy. The liturgy is what the parish does as a parish; it is the Gospel in motion; it is the point in time in which man knows personally the eternal presence and redemptive love of God.

The movement which Southcott refers to, and which others refer to under different names and citing different examples, differs from older movements of ritualists and ceremonialists in that it is not the liturgy itself which is to give birth to the Spirit, but rather it is the Spirit Who is to be waited upon by the congregation of God's people and Who is to give the liturgy power and to lift it from the plane of mere rite and ceremony to that of sacrament. This is not a logical deduction. There is no axiomatic reason why He should do this, but Christians trust that it is so and we have the testimony of real parishes that indeed it is true.

Perhaps the most significant of all the changes which have come over the mind of the Church in the breakdown of Protestant and Catholic nationalism has been a rediscovery of the Church's own self-consciousness and a reassertion of the meaning of the things which distinguish the holy fellowship from other fellowships. The distinction began to assert itself in the nineteenth century, notably in the Oxford Movement. A distinction had always been made among individuals—saints and sinners—but the novelty, which is only novel in relation to the Protestant era and Middle Ages, is in the distinction of the fellowship as such, in much the same way as St. Paul made it when he referred to the "saints" at Corinth even though few of them seem personally to have merited such a compliment. The strength of the old ways of thinking is,

perhaps, responsible for the failure of the tractarian effort to produce a balanced self-criticism of Anglicanism.

However, the current self-consciousness of the Church as Church was undoubtedly forced upon it from the outside, rather than developed on the inside. For the first time in its European memory, the Church finds itself in secular societies which do not make distinctions because of "religion and creed" because they regard such distinctions as troublesome and irrelevant. Modern secularism regards religion as part of the cause of the alienation of men from one another, not a possible solution to it. It takes its philosophy from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and regards it as virtually seditious for Christians to suggest that reconciliation probably will not be achieved by propaganda.

The nineteenth-century moralist believed that a Christian standard of morals could still be upheld without the Christian faith in God. But it has now become evident that this was an illusion. The modern world has moved away from Christian morals, and has now no fixed standard of right and wrong, and no common faith that there is a right and a wrong.<sup>4</sup>

It is possible to overstate the case for the immorality of the modern world, which compares favorably at most points with that of other periods. However, the change in the position of the Church is not likely to be overstated. In a practical sense, Christians are placed in an infinitely superior strategic position for evangelization, and once it becomes evident that the clergy are not able to carry out the mission of the Church alone, once the command is felt for all God's people to become apostles, the Church's "self-image" changes, and the old pictures of the Church as a building or a book or a hierarchy are necessarily subordinated to a concept of the Church as a people set apart from the rest of the world for the sake of the rest of the world.

For parishes perhaps the key idea, in this more or less unconscious transformation, has been that of participation. The moment it is seen that each baptized Christian is committed thereby to an apostolic ministry—whether he is faithful to it or not—it no longer is satisfactory to consider the parish as an organization "which provides religion for those who want it".<sup>5</sup> The parish can no longer be a place where people go to watch religious ceremonies performed by professionals. And once

<sup>4</sup>A. G. Herbert, *Liturgy and Society* (London: Faber and Faber, 1956), p. 29.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 27.

the decisive importance of the individual Christian in the Lord's plan of redemption becomes evident, it is inevitable that it should find renewed expression in the "liturgy of the lay order" and that such expression should have an instrumental effect upon the life of the whole Church.

The Church is not fully the Church unless it gathers together all ages and sexes to wait upon the Spirit, to discuss what it means to be a Christian congregation, to be a mission station, to actualize what is sacramentally given in Communion, to work out a common policy.<sup>6</sup>

As in all ages, the Church invites the modern man to believe and to make a decision to commit himself to Jesus Christ. But, with more emphasis than before, the Church goes further in inviting the modern man—modern skeptical man—to actualize his belief and his decision in active participation as a "member of Christ", and all that.

Ideas of "happy fellowships" have been carried to nauseating extremes in recent years, especially by American Protestantism. This is not what we are here concerned with. What we are concerned with is the parish which may call modern man to participate in the sacramental life of the Church because it can show that reality as such is sacramental. Christians have always believed this technically, but when there was no distinction between Church and society it was natural that the distinction should be made along other lines with emphasis, and consequent efforts to judge, upon the inward hearts of men. The hoary arguments between "receptionists" and "instrumentalists", in reference to the sacrament of Holy Communion, are a graphic illustration, and a sad one, of the striking defect in traditional sacramentalism.

The life of the Church is sacramental, not mainly because it possesses two, or seven, or a hundred sacraments, but because it focuses things unseen and experiences of eternity in things and experiences which can be seen and experienced visibly, tangibly, consciously.<sup>7</sup>

Christianity in the beginning could receive the revelation of God in Christ because it saw reality, as such, sacramentally. For the Hebrews God revealed His true nature in and through things and events and

<sup>6</sup>Southcott, p. 4-5.

<sup>7</sup>Henry de Candole, Southcott, p. xv.

persons. For the Church Fathers it was not impossible to suppose that this applied to Gentile history as well as Jewish history. Modern man will not accept the Incarnation as a fiat of God simply because Christians say it is so. But when modern man sees the sacramental nature of the whole world, then he can see the Incarnation. The holy fellowship, in so far as it mediates the Holy Spirit in our time, is holy primarily in a sacramental way rather than a moral way. It by no means may be said that *the Church in the present moment* is completely aware of its sacramental nature, but only that parishes and individuals are beginning to ask the right questions. In a pastoral connection the question has been phrased thus:

How are we going to win people to take an active and intelligent part in the public prayers and worship of the Church and enable them to find in them the expression of a religion which is able to raise and ennable character and create that sense of fellowship and corporate life which can make our religion a living witness to the world and a regenerating power in society? How are we to make the "dead bones" live?<sup>8</sup>

It has been manifest for a long time in many different traditions, that the corporate worship which people participate in does not often approach being a real expression of their own faith, and sometimes it does not even approach being an expression of the Christian faith. Protestantism and Catholicism shared the tacit assumption that the role of the lay people—the non-professionals—in corporate worship was that of spectators. Even in such Communions as Anglicanism and Lutheranism, where the theology of the doctors would have seemed to imply that all were to participate, the primary mode of expression reserved for the laity was essentially extra-liturgical—the hymns. Anglicanism also included psalmody in its services of Morning and Evening Prayer, but the idea of all people gathering together "to give thanks" to God as a body does not receive very adequate expression in the long monologues by the clergy. However, the conviction is apparently coming back in some quarters, at least, that the Church does not gather when the members do not gather, and the Church cannot do anything except what the members do. Holy Baptism becomes an act in which the whole Church gathers to receive a new member; the Holy Communion becomes an act in which the whole Church participates most fully in the self-sacrifice of the Lord, Jesus Christ. These are the definitive acts

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<sup>8</sup>Reference Unknown.

of the Church as Church and it is here that the parish must look for the power to bear witness to its Lord and the love to redeem His world.

It is all too customary for the Protestant Episcopal Church to be grossly complacent concerning its liturgy and to regard it as its own standard of perfection. Under the various party divisions within the Church, the liturgy is thought of in quantitative terms—the more ceremonial acts and the more vestments and the more candles, the more “high church” a parish is. There is no inherent reason why a reserved, rather austere rite is less “catholic” than a more complicated service. Nor is there an inherent reason why it is less “evangelical” to sing a service, except where the musical setting is such that it handicaps, rather than facilitates, participation by the whole parish. Where parishes have become conscious of themselves as evangelistic “cells” in a secular world, the movement which Southcott mentions, the movement to interpret the Gospel in terms of fellowship, has appeared, sometimes practically spontaneously. And in these parishes the Prayer Book has taken on both new meaning and new flexibility.

It is unfortunate in some, though not all, respects that the Protestant Episcopal Church stands in a tradition which does not encourage radical criticism of its rites and the way it enacts them. Criticism is no longer suppressed, but the Prayer Book still tends to become a kind of Holy of Holies which may only be surveyed and adored by the faithful. The problem is not that the Prayer Book is overvalued, but that too often it is judged by the wrong values. The result of this, in part, is that criticism of the book and its use centers in groups of people who do not like it anyway and who would rather have another rite from a completely different tradition. In reaction to this, those who appreciate the book and who more or less agree with its theology, together with those who are simply unconditionally loyal to it, tend to be uncritical and rather defensive about it. It is not uncommon in the Church at the moment for people to believe that the Prayer Book should be revised, people who have never themselves entered richly into the corporate worship of the Church according to the Prayer Book as it is. It is the privilege of the Church to modify or revise its Prayer Book as it sees fit, but only those who have an intimate appreciation of the book as it is, are likely to be able to revise it intelligently. Those who prefer to use other service books thereby admit that they do not happen to have experienced the full meaning in the Prayer Book rite.

However, I for one see as great a need for the rediscovery of the

contents and flexibility of the present Prayer Book as there is a need for revision of it. For modern secular man, whom we would bring to Christ, the criterion is whether he really sees what the Christian says is there. For him it either is or isn't relevant to him. A number of parishes are learning that it has been the Spirit Who was absent and not the form which was defective.

The Church is blessed with the custom of having its corporate worship in a language the people can almost understand. The Tudor prose yields its meaning to the modern reader at least somewhat more easily than Latin or Greek, and the book would probably lose more than it would gain in an attempt to rephrase it completely in the common idiom. The Prayer Book was the handiwork of scholars and it tends to be more didactic in places than the present situation makes desirable; indeed the didactic element is often mildly offensive to modern tastes, but we probably are a long way from the time when the people who gather to express their faith liturgically will not include a great many who are not quite sure what that faith is. However, it might be maintained that there were more appropriate places to be didactic.

Anglicans should stop writing apologetic tracts which claim that the English Reformation, and hence our Prayer Book, came about by popular demand. That we today consider Anglicanism to have emerged from two and a half or three centuries of religious strife with a positive net gain, in no way justifies the falsification of history, even for the purpose of whipping up loyalty to Anglicanism. Once the conflicting reports of historians are laid out to dry, it appears that the Reformation constituted a catastrophic disruption of the corporate religious life of one of Europe's most devoted Christian nations—a disruption which has not yet been reconciled in that country. There is evidence of a high rate of Church attendance and a genuine, if ignorant, common faith in the country before the Reformation. Attuned as they were to a thousand years of the old Latin rites, the English people do not seem to have been overly appreciative of the manner in which the Tudor regimes, Protestant and Catholic alike, rammed new liturgies—and new religions—down their throats. Whatever may have been the theological gains, the results in the local parish churches appear to have been that the people no longer liked to go to church as they had before. They quit going altogether to midweek services, which seem to have been rather well attended before the introduction of the Prayer Book, and they were no longer as enthusiastic and anxious to go on Sunday. Gregory Dix quotes the Protestant Nicholas Ridley as saying,

It was a great pity and a lamentable thing to have seen in many places the people so loathsomely and irreligiously come to Holy Communion and to the Common Prayers . . . in comparison of that blind zeal and indiscreet devotion which they had aforetime to these things whereof they understood never one whit.\*

The reformers were right, we may presume, in their conviction that the corporate worship of the Church should be in language people used in every other area of their lives, which happened to be the language they could participate in, though this latter consideration does not seem to have been as important to them as was the teaching value in an English rite. However, they also demonstrated accidentally that corporate worship springs from the hearts of the people assembled or it simply does not happen.

Our own parishes, as we have noted, seem to be just entering upon a new sacramental life and of the power of the liturgy in modern society—both as a source of unity for the Church and as a font from which Christ's love flows into modern secular community. What the Church certainly does not need is another reformation, or a *purge of its own traditions, or still less a radical "revision"* just at the point when it is reaching some kind of fulfillment. What it does need is to be encouraged in its parishes to go ahead and express itself liturgically in the twentieth century, to come together to wait upon the Spirit, and to rediscover in the parishes its true nature as the divinely consecrated sacrament of secular society.

The answer to modern secularism is not a secular Christianity, and much less a "return" to the Gospel in terms of the problems of another age. The answer rather is the interpretation of the eternal Gospel in terms of today's questions. This is most effectively done today in terms of dynamic action and process, rather than the static concepts which satisfied another age. Whatever his faults, twentieth century secular man has accepted God's creation as worthy of examination and of appreciation. To him the material creation is the really real. Only a very few modern men are scientists or think in the confidently rational patterns of the scientific method, but nearly all are materialists—even most of those who vehemently denounce materialism. This is why it is possible to hope that the language of a sacramentalism which also regards the creation as really real, and which is rooted in the reality of the Incarnation, will be heard and responded to by modern man wherever the Church itself understands the language.

\**The Shape of the Liturgy* (Westminster: Dacre Press, 1954), p. 687.

It is in the parish that the Church gathers to be the Church, with all its members offering themselves as one body to God in the Lord, Jesus Christ. When modern man asks to be shown, which he most assuredly will, the only reply must be, "Come and see."

"Where can I meet the Church?" "Come and see; yes, come and see a Baptism." Would the administration of the great evangelical sacrament of Baptism be a great common act of worship proclaiming the Gospel?

"Where can I meet the Church? Where can I meet the Church in action?" "Come and see; yes, come to the breaking of bread." Would it be a great act of common worship; would all ages be represented; would the preaching of the Word be an integral part in it and would there be a general Communion?<sup>10</sup>

The gravity of the situation which faces the Church in the second half of the twentieth century is often stressed; all situations appear perilous to the faint-hearted, and all of us are faint-hearted when the stakes are high enough. There are those now, as in every age, who would build fences around the truth to protect it.

Frankly, we are not anxious about the Church; it needs no protection but its own eternal truth; it never has had any real protection but its truth, all other Church defenses are useless and built on sand.<sup>11</sup>

Yet there is evidence that the Church is discovering itself with a knowledge of the language of modern man, and that this materialistic language bears the weight of sacramental and Incarnational truth. It is just at the point where the Church as institution appears so frightfully inadequate to meet the new demands of a new era, that the Church as a living body asserts itself as the holy fellowship.

Organized Christianity is a failure, but then *organized anything is a failure*. Christianity is a life and you cannot really organize life in its fullness, it always tends to break its body and reform it into a more perfect expression of its real soul.<sup>12</sup>

The Gospel in the Church in the present moment is that Jesus is the Christ in the present moment. The reply of modern man is, "Show

<sup>10</sup>Southcott, p. 4.

<sup>11</sup>Studdert-Kennedy, p. 15.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

me." The invitation of the Church is, "Come and see." Only the Church whose members dare to be ambassadors of Christ can say, "Come and see." And only the parish which gathers together to wait upon the Spirit can find the courage, the power, and the divine love, to represent Christ.

"Again and again in peace, let us beseech the Lord."<sup>18</sup>

## THE MATERIAL AND FORMAL PROBLEMS OF ECUMENICS

By CHARLES-JAMES N. BAILEY

Lutheran scholars often refer to Luther's views on faith and the Scriptures as the material and formal principles of the Reformation. When the traditional relationship between form and matter is understood, it affords the means for a lucid analysis of current ecumenical problems. Form is understood as the active principle which makes passive "matter" to be a specific thing. Form gives meaning to an act, as in "formal sin." The words (form) of Holy Baptism make what would be at most a bath to be the Sacrament. Put into contemporary terms, a given form (configuration) of electrons, protons, and other electrical charges makes light-energy into this or that atom, molecule, and specific "thing." Besides the form and matter essential to a thing (its essence), various "accidental" forms will be present. For example, it is not essential, only accidental, that a table be of this or that color, size, or shape.

The *material problem* of ecumenical thought is that of authority: where is the ascertainable source of certainty in religious questions? Since the Protestant Evangelical rests his authority in the Bible, the material problem presents itself to him as finding the criterion for distinguishing the true from among the many inconsistent interpretations of Holy Writ. The Catholic, on the other hand, believes that God would not have left humanity destitute of the truth somewhere (cf. John 16:13), and that that "somewhere" is the consensus of the Church founded on Christ and the Apostles. So, where Christians have always differed, we may not be able to ascertain which among various

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<sup>18</sup>The Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom.

sentiments is true; but where they have long been in accord, that is the truth! This kind of Catholicism does not, as both Romanist and Protestant, set tradition on one side and the Scriptures on the other; but rather agrees with St. Cyprian that the Bible is the head and font of the divine tradition, and therefore is part of it.

The *formal problem* (which has to do with intention, intellectual climate, ethos, orientation, etc.) of ecumenics is to understand what separates Christians so as to preclude their even beginning to understand the basis of differing religious outlooks. For it is obviously possible for a Protestant Evangelical, a Liberal, and a Catholic to believe the same historical facts about the Incarnation and the Crucifixion—the same matter—and yet arrive at radically differing kinds of religion.

The Protestant Evangelical may regard the Incarnation primarily as the revelation of a saving heavenly "Word," and think of salvation as hinging on the written Word and preached Word (cf. the threefold Word of Karl Barth, who, however, is no Evangelical). His emphasis will be soteriological, and the focus of his religion will be the pulpit. Cardinal terms in his theology like "imputation" reveal the primary psychological emphasis.

The Liberal may view Christ's Incarnation as the highest example of a general principle (say, the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man), whose meaning far transcends and over-shadows any mere historical event. He will therefore take salvation to be the imitation of Christ's example, and base his religion on the Social Gospel. His criteria will be subjective and activistic. He will view foreign missions primarily in terms of bringing medical and vocational aid to the unchurched.

The Catholic emphasis on substance contrasts strongly with both the foregoing. Catholics conceive the Incarnation to be a sacrament joining the spiritual with the material, and salvation to be the incorporation of the believer into that Incarnation (the Mystical Body) chiefly through the partaking of the eucharistic Body of Christ. (The "triform Body" is the incarnate, mystical, and sacramental Body of Christ.) The Altar is focal for the Catholic ethos. This latreutic focus of Catholicism is "formally" more Godward than pulpit-religion—whether *kerygmatic* (soteriological) or *didactic* (sociological) in emphasis.

The way in which theology (form) affects religious experience (matter) is readily apparent in the three contrasting outlooks just presented. This is no new observation. It has often been noted that

Christ's Resurrection differed from that of Lazarus because of the apostolic interpretations put on each of them. Again, even if (as I have suspected) the Jewish aversion to graven images grew out of a "sour grapes" attitude towards the more advanced Canaanitish culture, this would in no way invalidate the more profound doctrines respecting graven images which became dominant. Coming to the contemporary scene, it is astounding how different the theological bases are which underlie the different definitions of a Christian: "A Christian is one who *believes* . . ."; "A Christian is one who *does* . . ."; "A Christian is one who *is* . . .".

The great weakness of contemporary ecumenical treatises is that they neglect the forest in favor of the trees. A salient example of this is W. J. Horton's otherwise very good *Christian Theology—An Ecumenical Approach* (N.Y.: Harper, 1955). This work presents us with a comparative theology lacking the perspective that can only be gained by digging out the overall patterns which pervade and permeate the doctrinal details presented in the book. More valuable as exemplifications of an approach are the motif-analyses of the Swedish theologians, G. Aulén and A. Nygrén. Nygrén's well-known analysis of love-motifs in various Christian authors has, tendentious and weighted though it is, indicated the feasibility of this method for reaching an understanding of basic patterns. If this analysis failed, it failed because it was only a tool, a tool not employed to unearth the very roots of the most fundamental cleavages. Thus, Nygrén's *Agape and Eros* (London: S.P.C.K., 1953) could never lead us to the answer of such a fundamental question as why Catholics class ecclesiology under Christology, whereas Protestants class it under Pneumatology.

Ecumenical understanding has been clouded by the use of crucial terms, especially the term "faith," in differing meanings. Certainly Luther understood the differences among *fides historica seu informis seu intellectualis, fides concreta seu apprehensiva*, etc. He was, moreover, aware of his having redefined "faith," if not of the subtler consequences of this. I have long since found it helpful to analyze "faith" artificially into "kinds" denoted by technical terms taken from the Latin cognate words: *fide* (cognitive "faith about"), *fiducia* (affective "faith in"; hope), and *fidelitas* (conative "faith with"; love). "Believe" can be analyzed in a similar fashion. The use of cognate terms helps one understand the similarities and differences alike found in different usages, and serves as a tool to form a perspective of the whole seman-

tic range. When one has understood the fact that half of Luther's redefinition of "faith" consisted in his combining *fides* with *fiducia*, one has come closer to understanding why discussions about faith among Christians of differing backgrounds tend towards an impasse. The analytical technique just set forth is a common one in semantics, and offers a useful tool for traversing the barriers among theologies.

But it would be an error to take the tool, the means, for the complete analysis. The goal of a perspective theology would be to relate the different doctrines of a given system in a meaningful way to a given basic point of departure. Perhaps only three internally consistent theological systems are possible in Christianity: the system of Calvin, the system of Schleiermacher (or of Rauschenbusch?), and the Catholic system. (The system of Mary Baker Eddy might illustrate another, deviant, system.) Of course, a theology must also be externally consistent to be true. The effects of various "non-theological" (i.e. sociological) factors on religious systems have been dealt with in contemporary ecumenical thought. The tools are available for accomplishing similar results in the realm of dogmatic factors.

The historian can trace a line from the Moslem philosophers, through Scotus, Ockham, Biel, and Luther, to Calvin (using motifs like "voluntarism, acceptilation"), explaining why Luther, given the philosophical background of his day, had no other choice but to take the line he chose, if he would reject works-righteousness. Nominalism has a place for "Christ for us" and for "each for himself," but it has no place for "Christ in us and we in him," at least as traditionally understood. Again, since Nominalism has no place for the miraculous "replication" of Our Lord's Body on many altars, the only choice lay between saying that Christ's Body is in heaven and nowhere else (as Zwingli concluded), and saying that Christ's Body is ubiquitous (as Luther taught).

The "diachronic" studies just suggested would furnish a prologue to "synchronic" dogmatic studies. Once the patterns, underlying differences, and the reasons for the differences, have been understood and set in perspective, a fruitful attempt at resolving some of the symptoms may be possible. One must seek to relate the trees to the forest, and the forest to the trees. The context for a perspective theology, it may be remarked, is greater, humanly speaking, than just Christianity. The two greatest ideological conflicts in the world today are between collectivism and individualism, and between materialism and spiritualism.

A perspective theology could show us how to find an alternative to these antitheses, and not with *ad hoc* paradoxes. On the one hand, I Cor. 12 shows how the individual can find fulfilment only in the whole, and vice-versa. This is the corporate ideal of Christianity. On the other hand, the doctrine that the Incarnation is a Sacrament (*cf.* I Tim. 3:16; Eph. 3:3-6, 9; Eph. 5:32) offers an alternative to the materialist-spiritualist impasse, and one truer to our experiences.

I have tried out a simplified approach to perspective theology among college students with some measure of success. One first ascertains the chief concern of a denomination, usually exemplified and focused in "its" book, and then one is able to understand the reasons underlying the denomination's criteria for Church unity. A perspective is thus gained. For Lutherans, doctrine is supreme; their typical book is a Confession of Faith; doctrinal unity is essential, while agreement in discipline and worship are accidental. The old-fashioned Wesleyans stressed discipline, had a Book of Discipline, and regarded differences about dancing, drinking, and so on, as essential. Doctrine and worship were secondary, so far as unity was concerned. Anglicans exalt worship, have a Book of Common Prayer, and seem more disturbed at the prospect of female clergy in other Communions than at the prospect in our own or other Communions of disbelief in parts of the Creed. College students are able to deal with ecumenics along these lines, and usually conclude that all three stresses just mentioned are fragmentary—which is another way of saying that neither doctrine, discipline, nor worship is accidental.

This discussion of the formal problem of ecumenics is longer than the discussion of the material and accidental problems, for obvious reasons. The form of a thing makes it what it is and distinguishes it from what it is not. Just as our world was mere chaos before it had a form (Gen. 1:2a), so religion is meaningless till it finds a form, a theology.

The chief *accidental problem*—accidental because completely dependent on the essential problems for its existence—of ecumenics is the one known as "apostolic succession." If, as the Evangelical holds, the Church is primarily a "congregation in which the Gospel is rightly taught and the Sacraments rightly administered" (Augsburg Confession), its continuity will be spiritual rather than physical, vertical rather than horizontal: the Church is a congregational "event" (*Ereignis*). But if, as the Catholic holds, the Church is primarily the Body of

Christ, rather than a body of Christians, then its unity will have to be bodily and tactal as well as spiritual, horizontal as well as vertical. So it is that the problem of the sacramental succession of the priesthood is only a symptom of deeper orientational divergencies, and *ought consequently never to be elevated into the main problem which many today would make of it.*

Apostolic succession is a thornier problem than other accidental problems of ecumenics simply because it cannot, once lost, be acquired on one's own in the way the Creed, Bible, or Liturgy can. The issue of "parity of ministers" in reunion schemes today is mainly a scarecrow erected by conflicting kinds of pride, since Protestants and Catholics do not disagree as to whether Protestant ministers either claim or desire to be Catholic Priests—they do neither. The essential question is whether the Church, its unity and its ministry, are spiritual or sacramental. This depends on one's understanding of the Incarnation and, indeed, the world. If the Sacrament of Holy Order is not to be viewed by Protestant and Catholic alike as a merely magical "going through the motions," some meaning, some intention, some "belief in what you're doing" must be understood by the parties taking part in an ordination, God included. Hence, the seriousness of the question whether a bishop who has voted to approve the validity of the Church of South India's ministry—where not only the Catholic, but also all other theories of ordination are constitutionally ruled out—can have the proper intention to ordain valid Catholic clergy since that date.

The analysis of the ecumenical problem into its material, formal, and accidental principles can, if rightly used, throw a flood of light into the darkness of our present confusion. At least, the whole matter deserves the primary attention of the ecumenical movement, if it is not to disintegrate into mere ecumenical politics.

### THE USE OF THE PSALTER IN PREACHING

*By GEORGE M. ALEXANDER*

One of the first tasks of the preacher is to establish in some way a relationship of understanding between himself and the congregation so that, first of all, he can persuade them to hear with full attention

what he has to say, and further so that he can lead the people at least to give consideration to the special points he expects to make in his sermon. It is the preacher's hope, of course, that he can be so persuasive as to have the congregation agree with what he says, remember the core of it, think it over and translate it into their own words, and make use in their lives of the new enlightenment.

In his attempt to establish that desired "rapport", the preacher will employ one or another of several well known devices. On occasion he will produce a surprise or a shock and then guide the thoughts of the congregation on to familiar ground. Again, he will appeal to them through some familiar and cherished text, some passage of scripture or illustration and lead them on to a consideration of less well travelled paths of thought.

If his intention is to use the latter approach and if he is to face the usual congregation of Episcopalians, the preacher will find that his mind turns again and again to the Psalter, either for the text for the sermon or for illustrative materials, for he knows that his people will have had more experience with the Psalter than with almost any other type of literature. Such use is made of the psalms in the Church regularly, and in schools and other gatherings occasionally, that the average church-goer will have some idea about a quotation from one of the psalms even if he cannot quote it himself or if he is not sure where he has heard it before. If nothing else about it is familiar, mention of a psalm is at least likely to conjure up in the minds of a congregation some thoughts about the Bible. People who rarely read the Bible are apt to turn to the Psalter when they do.

Thus, the vague familiarity which many people have with the Psalter is one good reason for the use of it in preaching. The preacher's own close acquaintance with the psalms will almost inevitably show up in his sermons as illustrative material from time to time, whether or not they be used as the basis of the sermons themselves.

The fact that the psalms are pre-Christian in origin and often sub-Christian in content presents no very difficult problem to the preacher, for the reason that, together with the rest of the Old Testament, the Church has adopted the Psalter for its own uses and adapted almost all the psalms to Christian purposes. Uncongenial sections of the psalms have been ignored or so thoroughly twisted as to make them only mildly offensive to the very scrupulous. Most ordinary and honest folk, for example, can be led to remember times when they themselves have been

tempted to say with the psalmist about somebody, "Pay them that they have deserved," or times when they might have been very glad to hear that "Great plagues remain for the ungodly," or to hear, say, Russia, referred to as a "washpot," or to see an old shoe cast over somebody somewhere—perhaps even over Israel. So much the property of the Christian Church have the psalms become through constant use that sayings such as these—and worse—are not greatly disturbing.

No more, and for the same reason, need the preacher be inhibited by the fact that in some of the psalms concepts of God are generally not quite those of the great prophets of Israel (e.g. 77:13, 81:9, 86:8, 95:3), that the doctrines of sin and retribution presented in the Psalter are often mechanical (e.g. 1:3-6, 37:14-18, 73:18-19, 73:23-26), that the views of the after-life are in general decidedly not what the Church teaches (e.g. 22:9, 115:17, 30:9, 28:1, 88:11). If the preacher admits these difficulties frankly and discusses them freely, the response of his people like his own reaction to his study of the psalms, is likely to be—"Yes, the difficulties are real, but . . .!" It is almost impossible for him or his people to consider the psalms as completely disassociated from the Christian use and interpretation of them. Such questions as are raised by these problems provide the preacher with the very opportunity he most desires and needs. He will find it a pleasure to deal with the questions in such a way as to show how the Church has made use of even these portions of the psalms.

## I

With a little imagination the preacher can approach the statement, "Yes, but!" and the question, "Why?" by talking about the psalmist. That his name is not known is of little importance. What sort of person might he have been? What does the Psalm reveal about his circumstances of life, his problems, his manner of thinking, his relationships with his people, with alien peoples, and most of all his expressed relationship to God. From what is revealed about him in his little song, is there to be seen anything which might be applicable to oneself? Are we in any way like him? Does what he has to say about himself apply anywhere in our own experiences? Does the psalmist set forth anything of use to us?

Perhaps a pair of contrasting examples will show this approach clearly. What can study and meditation tell about the writer of the first Psalm? First of all, though we do not know his name, scholars have

classified the psalm in the "Wisdom Literature." It may be assumed that the writers of "wisdom" pieces are mature people, thoughtful, observant, able to be active in many affairs yet with some detachment, concerned about "remote" truth rather than "expediency." Further, such a writer probably has become accustomed to spend some time in quiet meditation. He might have been a teacher, a rabbi, whose psalm was intended to be used for purposes of instruction. Certainly he is familiar with the Law and has found in it happiness, contentment, delight—so much so that thought of the Law is with him day and night. To "walk in the counsel of the wicked", to "stand in the way of sinners," or to "sit in the seat of scorners" is to court trouble. Thus, the righteous man will avoid companionship with such in the understanding that one who plays with fire is likely to be burned. The psalmist, then, will be cautious about his friendships, careful to be seen only seldom with those not concerned, as he is, about observing the Law. He believes that those who find happiness in keeping the Law will be fruitful like a properly planted and cultivated tree which in season is heavily laden with its proper fruit. Indeed, whatever the Lawkeeper does will prosper. Here is, perhaps, a rigorist, stern with himself and with others. But the wicked, the sinners, the scornful, cannot "hold their own in the judgment." They are "lightweight", like the chaff blown away from the threshing floor, having in them no real substance, not able to stand up under the strains life imposes. Perhaps his sternness grew out of observation of the general inability of the morally lax to hold up under adversity.

This psalmist believes in the doctrine of retribution and suggests that rewards for the righteous and punishments for the wicked are accomplished by God's action, although it is possible to see in his words the notion that rewards and punishments are as automatic as the fruit on the tree or the lifelessness of the worthless chaff.

Now some questions might be asked about him. Is his thought fully in line with Christian attitudes? What should be our attitude toward the "ungodly"? Should we withdraw from them? If so, how far, how much? What did our Lord say about associations with the ungodly? What did He *do* for the ungodly? Who *are* the ungodly? What did Christ do for *us*? Would the psalmist be a good man to put on the parish committee to plan and execute a mission to the local flop-house? Would he be a good person to be appointed to visit the local jail? Would *you* be such a person? How do *we* respond in the parish to the juvenile

delinquent, to one just out of prison, to the prostitute, to the parishioner accused of wrong doing in business, of adultery, to the alcoholic?

As we use this psalm in our devotions, what might well be the substance of our prayer? And as we look at the psalmist in the light of what we know of our Lord, of the Apostles, of the Saints of all ages in Christendom, what can we learn of our needs for the Gospel of Christ, and of the needs of the people we know? How can we minister to those needs?

The sixth Psalm suggests quite a different sort of writer. Whereas in the first Psalm the writer was thinking quietly about the glory of the Law of God and the advantages to be gained from obedience to the Law, the writer of the sixth was deeply troubled, perhaps writhing in pain so severe that it seemed that death was imminent. He speaks of his "weakness," of his bones as "dried up," of the "terror" in his soul. Whoever he might have been, his song is sad as it opens, a "lament." He believes that his trouble, his sickness, is brought on him by the Lord as a consequence of sin. "Rebuke me not in thine anger," he cries, "In thine indignation chasten me not. Have mercy on me." It would seem that his sickness had been with him for some time, long enough for him to be thoroughly worn out by it, and he asks, "How long, Yahweh?" He is weary to the point of flooding his couch every night with his tears. It seems, as it is with most of us in illness, that night for this psalmist was harder to bear than the day.

As if sickness in itself were not enough, the writer states that his enemies have gathered round, perhaps like vultures, to wait for the end and the pickings. Some scholars have suggested that the writer thinks the enemies are sorcerers who have at least added to his burdens, if indeed they are not altogether responsible for his misery. Whatever the cause or causes, the psalmist is convinced that the anger of God, the "long face of God," is turned toward him, and his plea is that God will turn the other way and give him relief and health. In his cry he remembers the "loving-kindness" of God and makes his appeal to that known attribute of God.

The psalmist reveals the substance of his thought about death, and, in so doing, the extent of his hope. He refers to Sheol, the place of departed spirits, to which he will go if his plea is not answered; and subtly reminds Yahweh that in Sheol he cannot give Him thanks or ever remember Him. There is here the suggestion of bargaining with God for his life and of the idea that his thanksgivings are of some interest to

Yahweh. If he is allowed to die, that will be the end of the matter both for himself and for God. Thus his hope is to be restored to health in this life, no more, and the inference is that if his prayer is answered he will remember to express his thanksgivings in every proper way.

Assurance is expressed in verse 8, triumph in verse 9, vindictiveness in verse 10—if his enemies are persons. Some scholars think these verses were added by the same writer after his recovery and that the last verse might be pointed toward the enemies of God. It is possible, though, that the psalmist was really referring to his own enemies who “stepped on him when he was down”, and that now that he is well, he, like many of us in similar circumstances, was simply taking his turn at jeering at those who once laughed at him. People, even Christians, are like that at times.

Having given this background on the psalmist, the preacher might say something about the psalms of lamentation as a class. He will surely want to show the contrast between the psalmist's ideas of God, death, and sin (although the meaning of sin in the psalm cannot be clearly drawn), and those promulgated by the Church; and he will want also to dwell on the psalmist's resort to prayer and his assurance in the midst of trouble. Various twists and turns of these ideas can produce a sermon which should be helpful to a twentieth century congregation.

## II

The Psalter might readily be used for a series of sermons which would make the psalms more useful in devotions or more readily understood and accepted as used in the Church's services. Authorship, types, purposes, and uses of the psalms in their pre-Christian history could be subjects for teaching sermons, together with comparison of the psalms with other bits of poetry in the Bible.

Or the preacher can turn to the psalms again and again to deal with the psalmists' treatment of the great themes which appear so often in them. The theme of despair and anxiety, with God as the only source of hope, appears in all the psalms of lament, sometimes as the despair of an individual, sometimes that of the whole people. Psalms 27 and 42, as well as 6 which was used illustratively above, are familiar examples of the former; psalms 44, 74, 79, and 80 are good examples of the latter. Despair and anxiety are often said to be characteristic of our times. Use of the psalms to speak to our people on these themes can be very worthwhile.

Psalm 139, standing in almost solitary grandeur, nevertheless strikes a note often heard in the Psalter in its glorious affirmations about God. While other psalms (e.g. 18, 19, 29, 65, 68, 95-97) often fail to reach the same heights of expression, still they offer the preacher splendid opportunities to speak on the wondrous understanding which the psalmists show us of God's revelation of himself to men. Possibilities for developing sermons based on these psalms are practically limitless. The awesomeness, the majesty, the wonder, the greatness, the mercy and loving-kindness, the closeness and marvellous presence of God—for all these themes there is material in abundance in the Psalter.

The psalms show also remarkable astuteness in delineating the character and in assessing the relative value of man. The eighth Psalm, for instance—what preacher has not quoted this hymn or used it as the basis for a consideration of the doctrine of man? Psalm 139, while concerned with the omnipresence and omniscience of God, exhibits also a penetrating understanding of human psychology; and Psalm 51 surely portrays a man acquainted with sin and the need for the power of God to save. In the latter a profound truth—"Against thee only have I sinned"—is stated; and here, as in Psalm 130, there is no denunciation of any but the sinner himself. Nor is there in these psalms any thought of an automatic association between sin and adversity.

In his use of the psalms for texts on the doctrines of man and sin, it is well for the preacher to be aware of the fact that Judaism does not teach a doctrine of original sin. To the psalmist, then, sin usually has to do with free acts, more often than not with acts contrary to the requirements of the Law. Psalms 51, 130, 32, and 62 speak, however, of the sin which is personal, not legal, secret, not obvious. All of them appeal to God, who alone is able to deliver the sinner from outward adversity or inner distress.

Psalm 51 sets a marvellous tone for thought about sin and sacrifice. "Thou delightest not in sacrifice . . . my sacrifice is a broken spirit; a heart broken and crushed, O God, Thou wilt not despise. . ." It is only when man has already been forgiven by the mercy of God that God will take pleasure in sacrifices and offerings.

Rich source materials are present in the Psalter, too, for sermons on the theme of thanksgiving and trust. The 23rd, or so-called Shepherd Psalm, has become a part of the thought reservoir of practically everybody, a source of strength and assurance for people in all sorts of trouble. The first six verses of Psalm 27 are also well known as an

expression of trust and hope; and the "whoso dwelleth under the defense of the Most High" of Psalm 91 has had a calming, comforting influence on many a soul, whether used in the home, hospital, or pulpit.

The themes of joy and thanksgiving are abundantly recorded, on behalf of both the individual and the nation. Only slightly less familiar than Psalm 23 is the one hundredth which speaks of the joy of all the lands, and the people of Israel in particular, that the Lord is God, gracious and merciful. Psalm 124 gives thanks that the "Lord himself" is on the side of Israel, and 129 recalls with gladness the times when the Lord "cut the cord of the wicked" ploughers who were ploughing long, deep, and painful furrows on the back of Israel. The preacher can have a sort of field day in describing the deliverances of Israel by the power of God, and he can easily apply the theme of joy in deliverance from sin and death through Christ the Lord. Psalms 105, 106, 107, with their refrains, "O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is gracious", and "O that men would therefore praise the Lord for His goodness", seem almost made whole cloth for Thanksgiving Day sermons.

Since these are only a few samples of the possibilities for the use of the Psalms in preaching, it is little wonder that a faithful congregation is likely to hear them employed as texts and supporting quotations more often than any other sections of the Bible except the sayings and parables of the Lord.

Of first importance is the phrase "Jesus said". So important are these words that the Prayer Book uses them twelve times to introduce a Gospel when they are not actually part of the text. Next, surely, in the order of greatest use are the words, "the psalmist wrote." The preacher who uses these words with some regularity will find that from the study of the psalms and the relating of them to the Gospel he will himself be greatly benefitted and from his own growing spiritual riches he will be able to share generously with his people.

#### RECOMMENDED READINGS

T. H. Robinson—*The Poetry of the Old Testament*

A. R. Johnson—"The Psalms" in Rowley's *The Old Testament and Modern Study*

W. O. E. Oesterley—*The Psalms*

Fleming James—*Thirty Psalmists*

S. H. Terrien—*The Psalms and the Message for Today*

## BOOK NOTES

*The Biblical Theology of Saint Irenaeus* by John Lawson. London: The Epworth Press, 1948, (\$2.95).

This is a careful analysis of the relation of the writings of St. Irenaeus to the documents of the New Testament. The results of its scrupulous textual examination confounds the patently absurd, but still influential, Protestant assumption that there is no truth in the ages between St. Paul and Luther. The author, being a teacher in a Methodist seminary, can hardly be suspected of an anti-Reformation bias. The major excitement in this book lies in the problem of how faithfully the Bishop of Lyons followed the teaching of St. Paul when he used his texts. Irenaeus has suffered from being shoved to one side as an ecclesiastical administrator who happened to dislike Gnosticism but who could not understand the Pauline teaching he expounded. The thesis of this section of the examination is that Irenaeus did understand St. Paul and that we have, on the whole, a correct interpretation of all that St. Paul had to say about the Old Adam and the New Adam. While Irenaeus' doctrine of "recapitulation" is an original emphasis, it is an extension of the Pauline teaching. Irenaeus did not believe in Original Guilt or in Original Sin; and it is the contention of this author, carefully supported by textual analysis, that St. Paul did not teach these doctrines either, but that they have been read into his writings. Irenaeus regards the spiritual history of man from the primitive, child-like state of Adam through the gradual revelation of religion, especially centered in the Old Testament, towards the coming of the New Adam in Christ. Sin and the Fall made necessary the Atonement, but not the Incarnation which was part of the plan of God from the beginning. This latter claim, it will be remembered, is fairly pervasive in Eastern Orthodoxy, and has a Western form in the teaching of Dun Scotus, and in Franciscan teaching generally, being drawn from the influence of Joachim of Flora. It has been emphasized recently by L. S. Thornton in *Revelation and the Modern World*, a book which also examines in comparison the Pauline texts and the writings of Irenaeus. Irenaeus' brilliant doctrine of Recapitulation, the doctrine that Adam "was a child", and when he sinned God did not cease to "create" Adam but by His two Hands (Word and Spirit) continued to mould the Image

out of the dust of history until the humanity of Jesus could be transfigured by the Divine Humanity of the pre-existent Logos-Image, is capable of a modern restatement of tremendous persuasiveness. Such a view of the Incarnation, of the history of revelation, and of the destiny of man, with all its historic and evolutionary nuances, breaks the shell of the narrow confines of the type of "Biblical Theology" which has been woefully current. This present book deserves careful examination because it challenges the claims of "Biblical Theology" at their source in the meagre texts upon which this edifice is built. Perhaps the basic difference between the Biblical Theology of St. Irenaeus and Karl Barth is the matter of distance and gulf between man and God. "In preaching the *Two Hands of God* he asserted that the Supreme God Himself both intimately indwells, and has incarnated Himself in the world He had Himself created" (p. 139). Part of this distinction lies in the Ireneic silence about Original Sin. "The first transgression is represented as the disastrous yet understandable error of an inexperienced and easily beguiled child" (p. 217). Speaking of the "Theology of the Fall", Lawson says, "it is clear that the system has been an erection upon, and by no means a growth out of, the Bible" (p. 218). All of this makes of this work a provocative and challenging book.

W. O. CROSS

*Christology of the New Testament* by Oscar Cullmann. Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1957, (DM 25).

It is impossible in a brief review to give the reader a clear picture of this important study. The author is established as a leading Swiss theologian, the heir to Karl Barth whose disciple he is. His scholarship covers a vast range, and he is equally at home in the discussion of systematic theology and biblical criticism. Almost every serious contribution to biblical knowledge which has been published in this century receives attention here, and the various schools of thought have been given fair consideration.

Yet one cannot give this book what dramatic critics describe as a "rave" notice. There are faults as well as virtues. Probably the most persistent weakness is the result of the author's theological convictions. The simple fact is that Karl Barth did not write the Bible, and that the many elements contained within Holy Scripture that cannot be reconciled with Barthianism ought not to be dismissed as secondary.

This leads to consideration of the second serious fault. Every attempt to compose a "biblical theology" represents an effort to find the master-key which unlocks all the doors. Unfortunately there is no such unity within the Bible as to make the construction of "biblical theology" possible. Like his predecessors, Cullmann has found unity, but it is that of the modern author's thought imposed upon the diverse productions of the early Church.

The plan of this book is brilliant. After an introduction to the problem of Christology and its significance for the New Testament, there are four main divisions. These deal with christological titles which are related respectively to the earthly work of Jesus, to His future work in accomplishing the consummation of history, to His present work in the life of the Church and of the world, and to His pre-existence and relationship to God. Under the first heading Cullmann considers Prophet, Suffering Servant of God, and High Priest. Under the second he deals with Messiah and Son of Man. The third is devoted to Lord (Kyrios) and to Saviour. In the fourth section attention is given to references to Jesus as Logos, as Son of God and simply as God.

In every case there is development of the background, both within and outside of Judaism, and to the use of the particular title in various Christian writings. Little known Jewish-Christian works are discussed, some of them produced by the Ebionite heretics, as well as the writings of Church Fathers, at least from Ignatius to Irenaeus. Much of what is said regarding Jesus as Prophet will be new and enlightening to almost all readers. The treatment of the Suffering Servant theme for the most part goes over material already available in such works as Vincent Taylor's *Jesus and His Sacrifice* or T. W. Manson's *Servant-Messiah*. What is said concerning Jesus as High Priest is not readily available elsewhere.

The two most important chapters are those dealing with Son of Man and with Lord. As long as one is careful to discount the debatable aspects of Cullmann's theology, it may be said that there is nothing quite so satisfactory in existence. The treatment of Logos is disappointing to those who have already worked through Bultmann's commentary on the Fourth Gospel, but after Bultmann there was little more that anyone could say. More could have been made of the concept Saviour, while the chapters on Messiah and Son of God do not really go beyond previous work. For all who desire a clearer understanding of what the New Testament has to say concerning Jesus, this is recommended

reading, but it is not to be accepted without criticism and solid thinking by the Christian public.

J. H. W. RHYS

*The Church School* by Paul H. Vieth. Philadelphia: Christian Education Press, 1957. (\$3.50).

This book is a comprehensive guide for church school superintendents, principles of departments, committees on Christian Education, clergy, and other workers who share responsibility for developing an effective program of Christian Education at the parish level. The guidance offered by Dr. Vieth exceeds the needs of many parishes but there is no problem of either small or large parish that is overlooked.

This is much more than a how-to-do-it book. While it is full of simply stated practical wisdom, the advice offered is grounded in sound educational philosophy and a dominant religious concern for the Christian growth and character of the learner.

Among many significant issues discussed, the following seem to center in the life and program of the average parish:

What is the relationship of the Christian Education program to the life and work of the Church?

How should the Christian Education program be set up so as to minister in the largest way to the needs of the congregation and the Church?

What about committees, officers, and teachers? What are their duties? How select and train them?

What is the curriculum? How is it selected and administered, and by whom?

How is Worship related to Christian Education?

What is the crucial importance of the home in an effective program of Christian Education?

In addition to these leading questions, many other practical problems are discussed and suggestions for dealing with them in workers' meetings are considered. This book is a rich mine of information and guidance. It would serve as an admirable basis for program material for use in teacher training programs.

VESPER O. WARD

*Man, Morals, and History: Today's Legacy from Ancient Times and Biblical People*  
by Chester C. McCown. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1958, (\$5.00).

This book is valuable for several different reasons. It is a piece of unquestionably fine scholarship by one who places Hebrew history in the over-all contexts of the latest and most up-to-date research in archaeological, sociological, and anthropological knowledge of more ancient civilizations. This alone would make this volume a helpful addition to any minister's library, but perhaps even more helpful would be the broad lucid descriptions of the historical and cultural contributions of the Hebrews to civilization and to progress.

It is in the area of progress, with all its controversial connotations, that this reviewer believes the book is remarkably significant and demands attention from all contemporary theologians. Professor McCown is unashamed of his belief in progress and is quite conscious that what he assumes is not shared by many contemporary theologians. But what makes his work so important is that he writes not as a naïve liberal of twenty years ago, but as one who is thoroughly aware of the arguments against his position and the historical and imminent tragedies of the 20th century.

He does not really argue theologically for the doctrine of progress. He merely assumes it so that it is not actually a theological defense of his belief in historical and religious progress, but an impressive witness to this belief on the part of one who relates so well the history of pre-Christian religions. When one begins with the assumption of religious progress and places it in the over-all chronological context of man's history, such a belief in progress does not appear nearly so untenable as we often are led to believe in times such as these.

C. F. ALLISON

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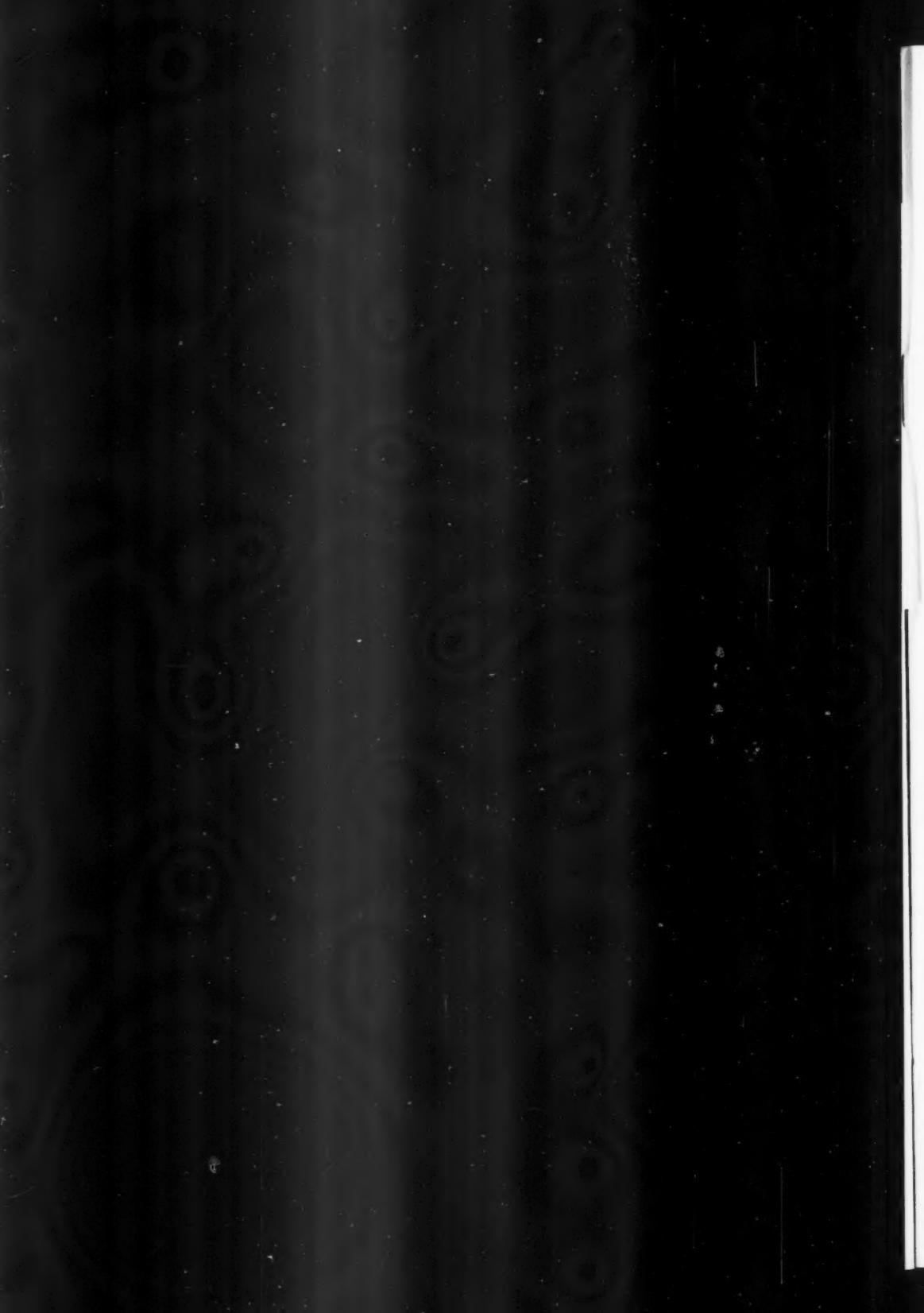
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